

# The Roles

## TEACHER BACKGROUND

### The Role Cards (16)

Get your role card... analyze your position ... elaborate your feelings ... and read the documents for some good support for your position.

- **The Superintendent**  
Neutral ... the main decision maker!
- **Park Ranger**  
Neutral ... will accept any option selected.
- **Citizen Budget 'Watchdog'**  
Do nothing ... it's a waste of money!
- **Park Maintenance Manager**  
The continued maintenance is a problem we keep having to deal with.
- **Environmentalist**  
This is an opportunity: Let it go back to nature!
- **Wildlife Biologist**  
Whatever you do, be mindful and careful of the endangered species.
- **Geologist**  
The flooding is going to get worse before it gets better.
- **Glaciologist**  
Warning: Glaciers melting will make floods increasingly worse.
- **Backpacker**  
Creating a new wilderness trail is obviously the answer.
- **Mountain Biker**  
Maintain the road corridor as a trail, not as a road for cars.
- **Day Hiker**  
We need a shuttle to Ipsut campground/trailhead or at least a new trail.
- **Local Business Owner**  
If you don't rebuild the road, I'll go out of business.
- **Family Camper**  
Keep Ipsut Creek campground accessible by the road or a shuttle.
- **Automobile Tourist**  
This is an obvious decision: Rebuild the road.
- **RV Camper**  
Rebuild the road at all costs – even if you have to increase fees!
- **Interested Citizens** (as many as needed)  
I'm waiting to get as much information as possible before making up my mind.

# The Superintendent

Having spent a career in the National Park Service, I have been involved in many difficult decisions that have had many different possible solutions. One thing about this one is that no matter what we do, we'll make some people happy, and some people unhappy. Unfortunately, I don't see a solution to this problem that will satisfy everyone. But it's my job to manage Mount Rainier National Park in the best way I possibly can -- to preserve it for future generations. So, I'm glad we have many interested people who love this mountain care about this decision. I hope all of the people have read the documents and understand the problems we face. I look forward to hearing this feedback before choosing my preferred alternative.

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# Park Ranger

I have been here at Mount Rainier for 25 years, and I have a pretty good feel for this place -- although I am continually amazed at how the park is different and new to me. Our visitors have a very strong emotional attachment to the park -- including, of course, in the Carbon River area. Over the years, we have had many floods that have damaged the Carbon River Road. Whenever we have rebuilt the road, we have seen fewer people come back and camp at Ipsut Creek Campground. Still, a lot of people still enjoy coming to the rainforest. I would hate to see us have to abandon the road and turn the campground into a backcountry camp that people have to hike to, but I do understand that there are budget considerations.

# Citizen Budget Watchdog

This ongoing problem is one that has an obvious answer: Stop throwing good money after badly spent money! National Parks are just like any other government agency -- they waste money, and until they just stop wasting money, we have to make some difficult choices. And let's face it, rebuilding a dead-end road that keeps getting ruined by flooding is a wasteful idea. Don't even suggest a "bike trail" to me -- they cost almost as much as a road, and they are limited to just a few people compared to the drivers on a road. Let nature take the road back, and if people want to be at Carbon River, they can hike there just fine. The main thing I want to see happen is no more of our tax dollars wasted!

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# **Park Maintenance Manager**

The Carbon River Road has become the largest ongoing problem at Mount Rainier. We have to worry about it flooding every winter. When it does not flood, it still requires quite a bit of maintenance to open it again in the summer -- we have to regrade the road, no matter what, every year. This is the third time in the past seven years that it has been severely damaged by flood, and we are spending an awful lot of our maintenance budget working on that road. Because of the amount of money we have to spend on the Carbon River Road, a lot of other maintenance projects in the park have had to go undone. It's really a shame in that way. But whatever the managers of the park decide, we'll do the job.

# Environmentalist

I see this as an opportunity! Seriously, it's good news that we're able to once and for all let the road go back to the wilderness. We never should have built a road there in the first place. It's a dead-end road that doesn't go around the park. But it does cut through a rain forest, and the more people that are there, the worse it is for the wilderness and the endangered species. We need to learn from what the Westside Road taught us: That if the wilderness wants to reclaim a road, it will take it back in one way or another. The three endangered species in the area should be enough of a clue to tell us that this is such an environmentally sensitive area that we'd be crazy to keep rebuilding the road.

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# Wildlife Biologist

The Carbon River area includes our very own rain forest -- something that is unique in the park, and seen in only a couple of places in the United States. Because it is different, we have some different animals that live in the area. Specifically, we have three endangered species: The Marbled Murrelet, the Northern Spotted Owl, and the Bull Trout. Whatever we do, we are required by law to consider the impact on these species. We'll have to make special accommodations in our construction schedule to make sure, for instance, that we don't disturb the murrelet during its short breeding season. We can manage one way or the other, but we must be very careful to preserve the critical habitat of the wildlife.

# Geologist

The geology of the area leads me to the conclusion that this river will flood the Carbon River Road again. And again. And again. Our satellite data indicates that the bottom of the river slopes toward the road, so that when there is a lot of water, it is very likely to spill and flood onto the road, even before it floods on the other side of the river. We have dredged parts of the river in the past, but this is a very expensive, very temporary solution. Because it is coming from a glacier, there is a great deal of debris and aggradation in this river. We know that the river goes wherever it feels like going ... and the geology of the area tells us that it feels like going over the road whether we rebuild it or not.

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# Glaciologist

We have evidence that the glaciers at Mount Rainier -- including the Carbon Glacier -- are shrinking at a much quicker rate than anticipated. When we say "shrink," we're really saying "melt." So we can expect more water, not less water, to be coming down the Carbon River in the future. Because of this, it would seem that a decision to close the road and reroute the trail up the ridge 100 feet or so would make sense. Frankly, I'm concerned that if we were to get another monumental rainstorm, we could have sudden flooding that would put people in danger. And don't forget the hydrothermally altered rock above the Carbon Glacier means that if we ignore the possibility of a lahar down the river valley, we do so at our own peril.

# Backpacker

The Carbon River area is a key area at Mount Rainier for backpacking because it's different than all other regions of the park, and it's an important segment of the Wonderland Trail. This trail, which goes all the way around the mountain in a 93-mile loop, is one of the most unique and special aspects of the park. And it's not just the Wonderland Trail ... there are many significant and even historical trails that would become unavailable. What would make this work, though, would be a new wilderness trail that people can take. Now, it's a 10-mile round-trip hike just to get to the Wonderland Trail where the real hiking begins. If we could take a beautiful trail instead of walking along an old road, it would be fine.

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# Mountain Biker

You can't completely get rid of the Carbon River Road! But at the same time, please don't open it all the way back up to cars. We're getting close to finishing one of the greatest non-motorized trail opportunities in the world, and the Carbon River Road is an amazing part of it. We don't need a beautiful highway to go from Mount Rainier to Puget Sound. We just need what we have, and maintenance that is much simpler and less expensive than roads for cars. Remember, we don't have any other place in the national park for bikes: We can't ride on hiking trails, of course, and the main roads are all so narrow and busy that it's generally dangerous. But a primitive Carbon River Road without cars? That would be perfect!

# Day Hiker

I have been to many places at Mount Rainier, and the Carbon River area is the most important to lots of day hikers. This is the closest entrance to Tacoma and Seattle, so people like to come up here and take a nice hike, and go home. Don't take that away from us. We shouldn't have to carry a tent and sleeping bag or always go on 25-mile hikes. You don't have to rebuild the road every time it washes out, but it's at least give people some access to Ipsut Creek Campground, like a shuttle bus. Otherwise, we'll have to drive all the way around the park to join the hordes at Paradise and Sunrise for nice hiking opportunities. Without good access to Ipsut Creek Campground, we'll miss 20 percent of the great hiking at Rainier.

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# Local Business Owner

We run a general store and deli in Carbonado up the road, and we provide a key service to people who go to Mount Rainier. We're the last place cars can stop for gas, and of course, we make great box lunch sandwiches for hikers and campers who are on their way up to the Ipsut Creek Campground. If you were to stop maintaining the road, the visitation at the northwest corner of the park will drop significantly. Many people I know have gone to Ipsut Creek for as long as I can remember -- to hike, to camp, to have a picnic, just to enjoy the rain forest and old growth ... it's a key part of our community and our business. If you don't rebuild the road, I'm sure we and others will go out of business.

# Family Camper

I have been to Ipsut Creek Campground almost every year for about the past 30 years, first with my parents, and then with my friends, and now with my own family. It's much closer, and -- to us -- it's more beautiful than other places at Mount Rainier. We can see the mountain from our house, and of course there are lots of places we can get great views. But where else can we go with our families to experience an old-growth forest, and a rain forest, and just the wonderful, peaceful campground that the National Park has provided for many generations? We love it there, and if you are unable to keep the road open, please keep the campground open and have some sort of a shuttle to at least get us close.

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# Automobile Tourist

We need to get this road re-opened, or people won't be able to enjoy this park as much as you'd like them to. I've driven around lots of national parks, and Mount Rainier is one of the best. I love to see her different aspects, and that includes the spectacular rain forest. I hope you won't ignore just regular everyday Americans who want to enjoy this wonderful place. Remember, some of us are older or can't hike as far as some of these big backpackers who are like billy goats. We just want to be able to drive in and see some of the sights and maybe some wildlife, and do the short loop trails. Please don't rob my kids and grandkids of this chance: Mount Rainier isn't only for high-climbers -- it should belong to everyone!

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# RV Camper

I think you should realize that families as well as seniors and others need the Ipsut Creek Campground. There are only two other places at Mount Rainier National Park where we can explore America and hook up our recreational vehicles. Some people say we're wasteful because we don't get the gas mileage that some of these hybrid cars do, but we're also true environmentalists; we really believe in the "leave no trace" philosophy of visiting and loving our national parks. All we need is a road. It doesn't even have to be highway, just a road we can carefully drive over to reach some of the beautiful places that our ancestors left for us. If you have to charge a little more to keep maintaining the road, that's OK ... it's worth it!

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# Interested Citizen

I don't have a specific viewpoint on what to do about the road. I'm just a citizen interested in what's going on, and hoping I can help officials make the most reasonable decision. I am not starting off with any particular priority, and I don't have a specific opinion. But I will read the documents and then pay close attention to the members of the public hearing ... and make up my own mind from the evidence and opinions people offer.